

Physical Education and Physical Activity

This fact sheet summarizes findings of the *2010 School Health Profiles*, a survey of middle school and high school principals and lead health teachers in over 300 schools in Washington State. The survey assesses health-related policies, procedures, instruction, and environments every two years.

To compare student perceptions or behaviors, selected data from the *2010 Healthy Youth Survey* are included.

The Healthy Youth Survey measured self-reported health risk behaviors of about 34,000 students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in over 200 Washington schools.

Laws and Policies

Minutes in Physical Education

Washington State law requires all students in grades 1–8 to receive an average of at least 100 instructional minutes per week per year in physical education.

WAC 180-50-135

Physical education – Grade school and high school requirement:
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-410-135>

High School Graduation Requirements

Minimum high school graduation requirements include satisfactory completion of two credits in health and fitness education.

WAC 180-51-066

Minimum requirements for high school graduation:
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=180-51-066>

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

With heightened attention on childhood obesity, it is critical to teach students that clear principles of fitness can lead to a more productive, active, and successful life.

Understanding the difference between physical education and physical activity is critical to understanding why both contribute to the development of healthy and active children.

Physical education is a K-12 planned, sequential program of curricula and instruction that helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, self-management skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active and healthy lifestyles.

Physical activity is the application of what is learned in physical education class.

Solid laws and policies lay the foundation for a safe and healthy learning environment.

The School Health Profiles survey reported that 97% of secondary schools required physical education.

Instruction on Physical Education

The School Health Profiles survey found that schools taught 12 key physical activity topics in a required course:

- 97% taught physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- 95% taught health-related fitness, such as cardiorespiratory and muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- 92% taught how much physical activity is enough, such as frequency, intensity, time, and type of activity
- 90% taught phases of a workout from warm-up to cool down

What are the Current Behaviors?

According to the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS), in 2010, 76% of 12th graders did not participate in physical education classes daily and 54% did not meet the recommendations for 60 minutes of daily physical activity.

One challenge to being more physically active is the amount of recreational screen time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching TV, playing video games, or using a computer for fun.

Staff Development on Physical Education

The majority of secondary schools reported using these materials for teaching physical education:

- 93% had goals, objectives, and expected outcomes for physical education
- 82% had plans for how to assess student performance in physical education
- 74% had a chart describing the annual scope and sequence of instruction for physical education
- 69% had a written physical education curriculum

74% of schools had all of their staff who teach physical education certified, licensed, or endorsed by the state in physical education.



Physical Education and Physical Activity

What Schools Can Do

- Encourage students to take physical education.
- Require instructional periods totaling an average of 100 minutes per week (grades 1–8) and two health and fitness credits for high school graduation requirements.
- Provide instruction led by certified, trained physical education specialists with a developmentally appropriate program with full inclusion of all students.
- Adopt written, sequential curriculum for grades P–12 based on state standards for physical education.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children and adolescents should have 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

In the Healthy Youth Survey, students reported being active for at least 60 minutes, five times a week:

- 58% of 6th graders
- 57% of 8th graders
- 51% of 10th graders
- 46% of 12th grades

Physical Activity Policy Guidance

Principals reported that the following groups helped develop or implement physical activity policy or programs in the past two years.

- 22% had student family involvement
- 23% had community member involvement

41% of health teachers reported that the school provided families with information to increase their knowledge about physical activity.

Physical Activity Opportunities at Schools

Not all physical activity for youth happens in the classroom. Opportunities for physical activity outside of physical education classes are important for increasing movement among students.

The majority of secondary schools have organized opportunities for students to participate in physical activity:

- 53% of high schools principals and 75% of middle schools principals reported that students were offered opportunities to participate in before- or after-school intramural activities or physical activity clubs

Most principals (87%) reported that their schools indoor physical activity or athletic facilities are used for community-sponsored physical activity classes or lessons.

Principals reported that students can use school facilities outside of school hours:

- 99% can use sports fields
- 97% can use running / walking track
- 93% can use tennis courts
- 93% can use gymnasium

Principals reported that the following activities were used to promote walking or biking to and from school:

- 62% had safe storage for bicycles and helmets
- 27% designed safe routes to school
- 18% used promotional activities or campaigns
- 17% taught biking / walking safety skills

Physical Education Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm
Division of Adolescent School Health

OSPI Health and Fitness Education

www.k12.wa.us/HealthFitness/
Washington State's education agency which provides leadership, service, and support to schools

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)

www.aahperd.org/naspe
A professional organization for standards in sports and physical education

Washington Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (WAHPERD) www.wahperd.com/

A professional organization for physical education and health education

Physical Activity Resources

Action for Healthy Kids <http://actionforhealthykids.org/>

A national partnership of organizations to promote nutrition and physical activity

Healthy Schools, Successful Students

<http://healthyschools.ospi.k12.wa.us/waschool/>
Provides information and resources to ensure that Washington's students are healthy and ready to learn

Let's Move! www.letsmove.gov/

A comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation

Resources are provided as a public service and do not imply endorsement by the State of Washington.

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